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ABSTRACT

Research findings indicate that role play can contribute to children's language growth through furthering: (a) growth in imaging, (b) increased recall, (c) discriminative listening, (d) development of novel forms of communication, (e) learning of socially appropriate communication, and (f) motoric actions. Teachers can facilitate role-playing by providing abundant and various instructional and constructional materials and real and toy objects. Teachers can unobtrusively influence the imaginative play of their students by (1) providing clock time in the classroom for the children to become familiar with materials, (2) gathering information on the children's immediate interests, desires and concerns and using the current information to provide direction for role play, (3) encouraging children to tell, express and show their thoughts and feelings as vividly as possible, (4) providing open-ended comments and suggestions, (5) altering the materials to suggest new uses, and (6) introducing new objects into the role play situation. (Author/RH)

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ROLE PLAY AND LANGUAGE GROWTH: STRATEGIES FOR IMAGINATIVE EXPERIENCES

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Role Play and Language Growth: Strategies for Imaginative Experiences

> "You can be Superman!", says Juan to Patti and hands her a cape, "And, I will be telling about you on TV!", Juan asserts. As Patti donnes the cape and Juan says, "She flies faster than a speeding bullet!", the case of characters is complete: the role play begins!

"Wonder Woman", "Mommie Getting Her Hair Cut", "Visiting Aunt Bea", "Becoming President", "The Hulk", and "Daddy Shopping" are just several of many role play situations that occur daily in schools, homes and neighborhoods across the country. Although role play occurs, the themes vary depending on immediate interests, present concerns, and age of the child. Role play develops easily. It is natural and provides suspense and gives a personal feeling of mastery.[1] In addition, role play is spontaneous and challenging. Creating Superman by donning a cape, playing "The Wicked Witch of the West", or "The San Francisco Trolley Driver" requires only imagination. From a "puff of thin air", the powers of imagination are at work creating characters, defining roles, and carrying them out through communicative processes. Young and older children show the products of their imagination by what they say and do in role play.

Role play, according to Curry and Arnaud, is the ability of the child to ". . . transform himself in pretend play to be a person or object other than himself, as indicated by his verbal and/or motoric enactment of his perception of that role."[2] Role play through imaginative experiences assists the child to develop and use[3], practice and learn[4] communication in both

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[1]Frank and Theresa Caplan, Powers of Play (New York: Doubleday, 1973).

[2]Nancy Curry and Sarah Arnaud, "Cognitive Implications in Children's Spontaneous Role Play," Theory Into Practice, 13 (December, 1974), 274.

[3]Jean Piaget, Play, Dreams and Imitation (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962).

[4]Sara Smilansky, The Effects of Sociodramatic Play on Disadvantaged Preschoolers (New York: Wiley, 1968).

receptive and expressive forms. There is already a large body of research that supports the potential of role play for communication. Examining selected research in role play and language shows the contribution of role play to language growth.[5] Strategies to develop role play can, in turn, serve the growth and learning of language at early and middle childhood levels.

Contributions of Role Play to Language Growth

Gleaned from research findings, there are several contributions of role play to communication processes. These contributions are: (a) growth in imaging; (b) increased recall; (c) discriminative listening; (d) development of novel forms of communication; (e) learning socially appropriate communication; and, (f) motoric actions. The first contribution of role play to language is the development of "imaging."[6] Imaging is a mental process that enables children to picture themselves "as-if" they are other people and objects.[7] As such, imaging is a foundation for and cognitive connective between imaginative role play and intellectual functions of language and memory.[8] Language requires imaging processes for the development of conceptual referents needed in receptive and expressive communication.[9] In support of Piaget, Pulaski's research findings show that ". . . the relationship of play to imaging is . . . the foundation for linking play and languaging."[10] Using imaging processes through role play, the conceptual

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[5] Curry and Arnaud.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Brian Sutton-Smith, "A Syntax for Play and Games," in Child's Play, eds., Robert Herron and Brian Sutton-Smith (New York: Wiley, 1971).

[8] Piaget.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Mary Ann Pulaski, Understanding Piaget (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 213.

building blocks of language, the research findings of Saltz, Dixon, and Johnson indicate that role play (compared to listening to) stories greatly enhances development of receptive and expressive language.[11] In addition, children who role play stories demonstrate more growth in reading readiness and imaginativeness than those who did not role play them.[12]

The second contribution of role play to language is increased recall. Role play is a rehearsal strategy useful in learning language concepts. As children role play episodes such as "Going Shopping" or "Electing a President", story content is rehearsed which aides aural comprehension in listening and retelling parts of the episode in speaking. Role play as a form of rehearsal provides needed practice for language memory and recall.[13] The fact that role play, ". . . requires imaging and/or language---that is, some form of symbolic function,"[14] leads theorists such as Piaget and Inhelder to conclude that role play provides rehearsal opportunities for language memory which contributes to ease of recall. Dean and Kulhavy's findings link the effects of role play with language memory and recall.[15] They carry the matter further by suggesting that the quantity of recall depends on the amount of rehearsal in role play and on the child's language level.[16] In addition, Yawkey's results show that the children who rehearse with role playing compared

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[11]Eli Saltz, David Dixon, and James Johnson, "Training and Disadvantaged Preschoolers on Various Fantasy Activities: Effects on Cognitive Functioning and Impulse Control," Child Development, 48 (May, 1977).

[12]Thomas Yawkey, "Effects of the FOURTH 'R---and Sex on Reading Readiness and Imaginativeness in Five Year Old Children." Paper delivered at the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 12, 1979.

[13]Jean Piaget and Barbel Inhelder, Memory and Intelligence (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

[14]Piaget and Inhelder, p. 11.

[15]Raymond Dean and Raymond Kulhavy, "Effects of Language Facility in Learning," American Educational Research Journal, 15 (September, 1978).

[16]Dean and Kulhavy.

to those who discuss story content have greater recall of language content.[17] Recall may also be strengthened by the kinds and timing of role play (used after listening) for Yawkey's results also indicate that five year old children role playing with puppets during and body after listening to the story show greater recall of language content than those who role play with puppets after and body during the story.[18]

Refining the listening and speaking of communication is the third contribution of role play to language. Listening for auditory and looking for motor cues are requisites for speaking which enable children to play their roles. How effectively the children communicate depends on their abilities to discriminatively use auditory and visual cues in the role play episode. Smilansky's research results on role play, show that the children using role play are able to listen more discriminatively and use more non-repeated words and sentences than those not using role play (compared to baseline measures).[19] Similar to Smilansky's results are the findings of Garvey and BenDebba that indicate a strong relationship between increases in length of speech utterances and use of group role play episodes.[20]

Role play develops novel forms of communication and is the fourth way it contributes to language growth. The development of new forms of language relates in part to improvising in role play. Improvising is the capacity of the child to bridge gaps between what he or she has already experienced and

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[17] Thomas Yawkey, "An Investigation of Imaginative Play on Aural Language Development in Young Children," in Play in Human Settlements, ed., Paul Wilkinson (London, England: Croon Helm, Ltd., in press).

[18] Yawkey.

[19] Smilansky.

[20] Catherine Garvey and Mohummed BenDebba, "Effects of Age, Sex, and Partner on Children's Dyadic Speech," Child Development, 45 (December, 1974).

learned and what the requirements of the role demand. For example, the sources for the roles are the children's past life's experiences and previous learnings. However, in role play episodes where the actors have no experiences to serve them in playing people and objects or at situations, new forms of verbal and non-verbal communication are developed to fit the episode and the role. Piaget's research findings clearly indicate that children develop cognitive language processes and these processes bridge the gap between what they know and what they need to complete the role playing situations.[21] The forms of communication that evolve, according to Piaget, ". . . have no known models or familiar antecedents."[22] The fact that the child develops and uses new communication forms shows the generative power of role play in service of language. In addition, Pulaski notes that improvising through imaginative play facilitates, "originality, spontaneity, verbal fluency, free flow of ideas and flexibility in adapting to new situations. . .!"[23]

The fifth contribution of role play is the learning of communication that is socially appropriate. Socially appropriate language is modelled after family, peer group members and significant others.[24] For example, in role playing, one child says "Place the glass to the right of the plate!" or notes to another, "Don't be afraid 'cause I will be here with you!" The language that is modelled and used serves socially appropriate situations.

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[21]Piaget.

[22]Piaget, p. 49.

[23]Mary Ann Pulaski, "Play as a Function of Toy Structure and Fantasy Predisposition," Child Development, 41 (June, 1970), 536.

[24]Smilansky.

Role play, through the opportunity of playing at life, provides real life situations for children to model language in social ways and thereby learn to solve problems, resolve conflicts, understand themselves as individuals and members of groups and ultimately enrich their social skills.[25] In addition, children's use of language in social situations, ". . . affords them the opportunity of playing at life and gives them a greater understanding of it . . .!"[26] Accordingly, Smilansky's research results show that children who use social language in role play, ". . . are better prepared and more readily integrated into real life patterns at their immediate environments at an earlier age than children who do not engage . . . in imaginative play."[27] In support, Robison says that by using social language and in real life situations, children, ". . . identify with adult roles, try them on for size, and develop ways of behaving and thinking as adults."[28] Social communication for real life situations gives children the opportunity, "to try out and practice overheard phrases and sentences and correct or modify them as others react to them or as their games and play take new directions."[29]

Role play increases language learning through motoric actions of the player. As children enact roles, they use body actions and movements to communicate what they are thinking and doing. For example, in role play the child may move his/her arm in "up-and-down" chopping fashion to pantomime Paul Bunyan and his ax cutting wood. Meaning is interpreted from these motor

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[25] Ibid.,

[26] Smilansky, p. 61.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Helen Robison, Exploring Teaching in Early Childhood Education (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1977), 27.

[29] Dorothy and Jerome Singer, Partners in Play (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 89.

movements. Thus, role play develops non-verbal forms of communication. Secondly, the actual motoric components used in role play encourages the development and learning of receptive and expressive language concepts. Frank, believing that children, "learn by not only touching, feeling, grasping what they handle,"[30] felt that motoric actions in role play help them "come to know", conceptualize and learn---cognitively and linguistically. The research results of Saltz and Johnson, for example, show that motoric and verbal actions used to re-enact role play stories are better than listening to stories as encoding factors facilitating language growth.[31] Further, theorists as diverse as Guthrie,[32] Piaget,[33] or Saltz[34] have long contended that motor actions made for and on objects provide the conceptual base for language and other cognitive processes. On the importance of motoric movements and non-verbal communication to language, Vygotsky notes that, "the meaning of action is basic, but even by itself action is not indifferent (to meaning). At an earlier age, the position was the reverse: action was the structural determinant while meaning was a secondary, collateral, subordinated feature."[35]

Role Play Strategies for Language Growth

There are several strategies for role play that can serve the early and middle childhood teacher and, in turn, encourage the development of language

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[30] Lawrence Frank, "Play is Valid," Childhood Education, 44 (September, 1968), 435.

[31] Eli Saltz and James Johnson, Training for Thematic-Fantasy Play in Culturally Disadvantaged Children: Preliminary Results," Journal of Educational Psychology, 66 (March, 1974).

[32] Edward Guthrie, The Psychology of Learning (New York: Harper and Row, 1935).

[33] Piaget.

[34] Eli Saltz, The Cognitive Bases of Human Learning (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey, 1971).

[35] Luria Vygotsky, "Play and Its Role in the Mental Development of the Young Child," Soviet Psychology, 12 (March, 1966), 15.

in children. There are two basic groups of role play strategies.[36] The first focuses solely on the classroom materials used for play and the second concerns the indirect guidance given the pupils in the episode by the teacher.

Classroom Materials. Environmental materials in the classroom are important to role play because they help shape the roles of the actors, add depth and provide direction to the role play episode and thereby have the potential for enriching language growth.[37] Essentially, the materials in the classroom provide a world for the children in which to role play. Classrooms that have few objects or many materials which lack variety hinder role play because of little stimulation provided by them.[38] In setting up and preparing the classroom for role play, the materials must be examined and selected with great care because of their potential to facilitate role play and language growth. Two strategies that assist the educator in preparing and selecting classroom materials are: (a) quantity; and, (b) variety.

Providing a quantity of classroom materials enables children to think carefully about their individual and group needs in role play. In a sense, sorting through and selecting the objects not only contributes to exploring their immediate materials environment but also provides opportunities to gain physical and social knowledge.[39] Further, quantity of materials with

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[36]Thomas Yawkey, "Imaginative Play Inside and. . .Out: Assisting the Young Child's Development and Learning Through 'Let's Pretend'," in Play in Human Settlements, ed., Paul Wilkinson (London, England: Croom Helm, Ltd., in press).

[37]Michael Ellis, Why People Play (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

[38]Ibid.

[39]John Dewey, The Theory of Inquiry (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1938).

opportunities for choice enable the child to identify and solve problems of selection for role play and learn methods of inquiry.[40] Quantity of materials available for selection substantially contribute to role play potential. The difficulty and complexity of choosing materials and solving meaningful problems vary, of course, with role play activity and the age of the child.

In addition, insuring the quantity of materials help children "climb into their roles" and to identify with the characters, and situations in the episode.[41] Further, when role play is thought of as opportunity for language growth, "it makes more sense to provide the kinds of materials . . . on which the child can predict his own problems and arrive at solutions consonant with his existing concepts."[42]

The second strategy in preparing and selecting classroom materials is variety. Variety means obtaining those materials for role play that can be used in more than one way and whose physical properties are challenging and attractive to the children.[43] The implication of the second category is that variety of materials contributes to the actual physical (i.e., by manipulating) and mental (i.e., through conceptualizing) uses of the objects.[44] Thus, materials that have variety of function and physical characteristics increase what children can do with them, how, why and, when the use them.[45]

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Bruno Bettleheim, "Reflections: The Uses of Enchantment," New Yorker, 58 (December, 1975).

[42] Irene Athey, "Piaget, Play, and Problem Solving," in Play as Learning Medium, ed., Doris Sponseller (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1974), 44.

[43] Ellis.

[44] Athey.

[45] Piaget.

Because play objects have variety of function and physical characteristics, children not only use them repeatedly but also come to better "know" and understand them. Coming to understand objects through repeated use is the conceptual and developmental base for all language processes.[46]

Selecting objects which are flexibly constructed and have more than one function, permits the child to adapt them to many different types and kinds of role situations. Several examples of materials which are flexibly constructed and adaptable to any role play are:

- . blocks and boxes
- . adult clothing and kitchen utensils
- . toy sets representing minature transportation vehicles, animals, and people
- . water, sand, rice, and navy beans

Physical properties of objects which help attract, challenge and motivate children to want to use them in their role also encourage and facilitate physical and mental uses or actions. Some examples of various physical properties of objects which physically and mentally attract and challenge the children include:[47]

- . designs such as checkerboard and striped patterns
- . textures, for example, rough, smooth, bumpy, soft and hard
- . forms such as square-shaped, rectangular and circular
- . colors, for example, bright primary and secondary colors and vibrant hues.

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[46] Piaget.

[47] Ellis.

By selecting classroom materials for role play from each of the following types of objects, the educator operationalizes the strategies of quantity and variety and maximizes the potential of role play for language growth. Based on the initial manufacturer's purpose for their construction and not on their actual use by children, play objects can be grouped into four types.[48] The four kinds of play objects are:

a. Construction materials are open-ended and multipurposeful in design. They are basic to role play because they are extremely flexible in purpose and function. Examples include: (1) large and small table blocks; (2) tinkertoys; (3) slinkies; and, (4) Lincoln or Canadienne logs.

b. Instructional materials are commercially designed by the manufacturer to teach curriculum skills and concepts. However, they can be used flexibly by children in role play. Some examples of instructional materials are: (1) puzzles; (2) nesting blocks; (3) checkers; (4) chess; and, (5) educational games.

c. Real objects are initially manufactured for adult purposes while others can be found in natural states. They are flexible in use and challenging and some examples are: (a) cardboard boxes from grocery stores; (2) discarded adult clothing; (3) sand, water, dried navy beans and rice; and, (4) wood used with hammer, nails and saws.

d. Toy materials are designed as miniature replicas of adult-sized objects in the world. There are many subgroups of toys and some of them

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[48] Thomas Yawkey; Herbert Dank, Play Inside and . . . Out: For Teachers and Parents of Young Children (Menlo Park: Addison-Wesley Publishing, in press).

include: (1) transportation toys such as miniature cars, trucks, and others which children ride for instance wagons, bikes, scooters, and Big Wheels; (2) animal and people toys, such as, scaled-down versions of horses, dogs, men, and women; and, (3) housekeeping toys, for instance, baby dolls, brooms, cups, and knives.

"Having insured that the many basic and varied materials for role play have been provided"[49], the strategies educators use with children to indirectly guide their role play episodes are examined.

Indirect Guidance. While the first group of role play strategies centers on the classroom materials, the second focuses on those that the teacher can use to indirectly guide children's role play prior to or during the episode. This group of strategies describes teachers roles and establishes guidelines for their indirect involvement in the role play episodes enacted by the children. All the indirect guidance strategies with children view the teacher's role as "a facilitator, a referee, a representation of reality and for cognitive and sensory input."[50] The strategies help the educator identify the types of input and how they are used for enriching role play.[51] These strategies are: (a) exploration; (b) opportunity; (c) description; (d) oral cues, (e) modifying objects; and, (f) adding objects.

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[49] Athey, p. 48.

[50] Nancy Curry, "Dramatic Play as a Curricular Tool," in Play as a Learning Medium, ed., Doris Sponseller (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1974), 70.

[51] Ibid.

"Exploration" is the first strategy of indirect guidance of role play as language growth. Exploration means providing clock-time in the classroom for the children to become familiar with the materials prior to role play. The children's active involvement and interaction with the world of materials requires the use of the senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, moving, tasting, and cognitive processes of language. Essentially, the use of the senses and peer group communication become grist from which more complex thought and language arise. On the importance of active involvment, Piaget[52] and Gagné[53] forcefully illustrate that sensual experiences are the building blocks of generalizations and principles and crucial to the growth of cognitive processes such as language. Thus, through active exploration, children become familiar with the materials, their properties, and come to know them better. Secondly, this strategy also permits students to talk with one another about the objects. Children use their fullest grammatical skills, while talking with other children, in unrestricted periods of exploration and communication and talking should be encouraged.[54] Finally, as the children familiarize themselves with and talk about the materials, exploration helps the teacher keep, "tuned in on the child's experiences in and out of groups . . . gives . . . clues to what props are needed to encourage the use of dramatic play as well as helping her decide what sort of input will lead more involved assimilative play."[55]

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[52]Piaget

[53]Robert Gagné, The Conditions of Learning, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970).

[54]Courtney Cadzen; Joan Baratz; William Labov; Frank Palmer, "Language Development in Day Care Programs," in Day Care: Resources for Decisions, ed., Edith Grotberg (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, 1971).

[55]Curry, p. 70.

Some ways to indirectly guide children using the exploration strategy are:

- manipulating play objects and discussing them prior to role play
- observing for changes in the classroom like new bulletin boards, interest centers, pictures, and posters
- visiting rooms in the school that children rarely see and observing their contents and uses
- walking around the neighborhood to see varying objects, types of buildings, people, animals, and shapes that make up the student's world
- describing experiences gained through observing

The second indirect strategy in guiding role play is "opportunity." In observing what the children do and listening what they say during exploration or other periods throughout the day, the teacher gathers information on their immediate interests, desires, and concerns. Opportunity means gathering and using this current information to serve and provide direction for role play. Because the interests, desires, and concerns are immediate, the strategy of opportunity employs this meaningful information for role play. For example, the theme of the role play can be any immediate situation of importance to the students, "on which they can focus and that can serve as a topic . . . , such as a toy, a snack, the children's untied shoe - something of shared concern between the child and the adult or between the child and child than can create a basis for communication."[56] With the strategy of opportunity, the educator can wait for meaningful situations to occur or

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[56]Richard Elardo, "Language Stimulation with Young Children," Child Care Quarterly, 6 (September, 1977), 183.

he/she can structure them as bases for role play episodes. Having experienced the situation, the students are better able to understand and in turn role play them. After noting concerns, interests, and desires or structuring experiential situations, several ways of using them include:

- developing them into meaningful role play experiences
- relating them to favorite stories through similarity in themes using role play
- turning them into role play of favorite TV shows
- using them as a basis to predict "what would happen if . . .!" and role play the predictions.

In addition, the opportunity strategy can be used for imitation. Here, the educator, ". . . provides a model of a playful person to the young child by making certain playful gestures, such as pretending to eat the ubiquitous make-believe birthday cakes at the sandbox."[57] The strategy of opportunity is very useful as an information gathering tool, for spontaneous and structured situations, or modelling of a playful person.

"Description", the third strategy of role play for language growth, is where the teacher asks the children to tell, express, and show their thoughts and feelings as vividly as possible. In using the strategy, the teacher desires to have children use and practice communication in role play that vividly pictures enactments. The purpose is to use language and make people, situations, and objects role played appear as real as possible.

Whether children respond with short telegraphic utterances, litteral communication or more abstract and complex language, the teacher uses the

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[57] Nancy Curry, "Dramatic Play as a Curricular Tool," 69.

description strategy by repeating the children's statements at opportune times during the role play. Repetition can also be used to serve description as children talk with the educator or with their peers. In the repetition, the adult adds descriptive words and lengthens the sentence. An example of such an "extension"[58] is, "Bark, bark, I bite with my sharp and pointed teeth!" repeated after the child utters the more literal form, "Bark, bark, I bite!" Older students are directly taught to employ description: younger children require modelling and reinforcement to learn it! In addition, the descriptive strategy can be used after role play situations in which the child is asked to guess the roles played by the actors. For example, "Jumping on the chair with a 'thud', the person quickly drew his long thin silver sword! What role did he/she play?"

Further, by using a reinforcement procedure "which involves waiting for some response or prompting some response on the part of the child, then rewarding this response . . ."[59] descriptive communication is learning and used by the children.[60] For example, the educator who holds up a fire person's hat, prior to role play, and says, "Anyone who wishes to use the hat, say 'may I use the bright red and shiny fire person's hat!" If the teacher waits until the statement is offered, and immediately gives the hat to the child after it was said, handing it to the child serves as a reward for his/her verbalization and aids learning. The strategy of description

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[58] Elardo.

[59] Elardo, p. 182.

[60] Richard Elardo, "The Experimental Facilitation of Children's Comprehension and Production of Four Syntactic Structures," Child Development 42 (May, 1971).

contributes to role play through rich detail of actions and helps develop abstract and complex language from literal or telegraphic communication.

The fourth role play strategy is "oral cues." Oral cues are open-ended comments and suggestions made by the educator during the role play and directed toward: (a) objects used; (b) roles; and, (c) situations played by the children in the episodes.[60] The open-ended suggestions are brief, offered at the "right" moment, and sensitively and constructively made. Like the descriptive strategy, it is also an extension of role play yet has a different emphasis. Oral cueing is an expansion of the role play episode itself through educator's open-ended comments designed to further elaborate the roles played by the children. Thus, the strategy focuses indirectly on children's language (not directly as does the descriptive one) since extending the length of the role play ultimately increases the amount of language used in the episode. Oral cues added at appropriate times to the play, according to Ellis,[61] introduce novel changes in the role play which are arousing and challenging. The strategy stimulates additional interest in the episode and increases its duration. For example, in using the strategy of oral cues directed toward play objects, the teacher might say, "Show in your play how the cardboard box is used as a bridge on which the tiger walks (rather than a bed in which it slept)." By incorporating these oral suggestions, role play increases in duration and quality because of the inclusion of novel elements.

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[60] Ellis.

[61] Ellis.

For situations, a brief example of using the strategy of oral cues is, "After Queen Shirley killed the fire breathing dragon with her soldiers, she then decides to hold a tournament in their honor! Show the tournament in your play!" In orally cuing for characters, the teacher singles out a role or roles played and, similar to cuing for objects and situations, offers suggestions to add depth and breadth to the episodes. A brief illustration is, "Johnny as you continue to play Uncle Sam, show in your role how pleased Uncle Sam is to be invited on the trip with Shanda, your niece, and her family!" Another way the educator can cue for characters and at the same time demonstrate a model of playfulness is expressing verbal concern in the children's on-going play, for example, "Did your baby's cold get better yet?"[62] Oral cuing for objects, roles, and situations generates "additional stimulus events which have the attributes that make for selective attention . . . and have some degree of novelty, uncertainty, or dissonance or complexity."[63]

The fifth strategy, called "modifying objects", asks the teacher to examine and then alter or change the physical characteristics and properties of objects used over a period of time in children's role play. With continual use, Berlyne notes [64] that play objects tend to loose their novelty (over time) and children's use of them in their role episodes diminishes. Objects that are familiar or those that are uninteresting and not used or

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[62] Athey, p. 62.

[63] Ellis, p. 91.

[64] Donald Berlyne, Curiosity and Exploration (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960).

those that have lost interest value to the children can be made more complex by changing their physical properties. By making them more complex, the desire and interest in using them again in play increases. Restoring interest value and novelty increases the potential for conceptualization.[65]

In addition, Ellis asserts that, ". . . with more complex situations there are more interrelations between events and components that are possible"[66]; and, ". . . the information flow is optimally arousing . . .!"[67] Changing the physical properties of objects by "increasing the complexity of an event, object or situation is achieved by increasing the number of distinguishable components, by increasing the dissimilarity of the components, and by manipulating the elements so that they cannot be categorized as just one item reacted to simply."[68] Examples of altering the designs, shapes, surface structures, composition, color, or other physical properties of objects thereby making them more complex include:

- painting checkerboard designs on table or floor blocks with tempera paint
- cutting several pieces of a cardboard jigsaw into halves
- sewing a short cape to an adult jacket used in dress-up
- painting play refrigerators, electric ranges, and sinks bright colors

The strategy of modifying objects is effective for increasing the use of

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[65] Piaget.

[66] Ellis, p. 92.

[67] Ellis, p. 93.

[68] Ellis, p. 92.

of play objects and facilitating language generated to functionally include these more complex objects in role episodes.

The sixth strategy is "adding objects!" Here, other objects and materials, in addition to those already in use in the role play, are given to the students. As the children spontaneously incorporate, interrelate and use these new objects and materials in their play, roles and situations are modified and enriched in the process. The children in individual or group settings spontaneously generate novel ways of including them in the situation.[69] This strategy like the others "generate optimally arousing information loads and advance the child upward along the scale of complexity"[70]---cognitively and linguistically. The children develop, use and increase their communication and conceptual abilities in seeking to incorporate these additional materials in their play and provide depth and ultimately enrich their role play episodes.

The materials included in the episode can be either physically related or unrelated to the present objects, situations, or roles used in the episode. The rationale for sensitively introducing related and nonrelated objects in the role play "is the idea that the dynamics of attention in play are based on the ability of [play] stimuli to increase the psychological complexity of the individual who perceives them."[71] Related objects in this instance are correlated with the theme. For example, as the children role play the episode, "Going to the Moon" introducing physically related objects to this

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[69] Ellis.

[70] Ellis, p. 95.

[71] William Dember and Robert Earl, "Analysis of Exploratory, Manipulatory and Curiosity Behaviors," Psychological Review 64 (June, 1957).

theme could include: (a) a dune-buggy-wagon; and, (b) space monster "halloween" costume. Some additional examples of this strategy are: (a) including other miniature animal figures, such as, ducks and horses to the activity, "On the Farm!"; and, (b) adding a minister's costume for another character, "The Preacher" to the episode, "Little House on the Prairie!"

Unrelated objects are play materials that do not readily match or are physically uncorrelated with the theme of the episode. Using the same example of the role play, "Going to the Moon", physically unrelated objects to this theme, for instance, are "sewing thimbles" and "orange peels." Although "sewing thimbles" and "orange peels" are not presently being used in and are physically unrelated to this episode (compared to objects such as dune-buggy-wagon), introducing these uncorrelated materials requires the child to conceptually associate and incorporate them with other objects and with on-going situations and thematic episodes.

Several other examples of adding unrelated objects could be: (a) introducing wooden pegs and bricks during the children's role play of the fairy tale, "Sleeping Beauty"; and, (b) including brown-paper lunch bags, toy cars, and trucks to stories like "Dracula" or the "Evil Stepmother!"

Through the addition of related and unrelated materials to role play situations, children find ways to functionally use them in their episodes. Extending language, practicing cognitive problem solving methods and lengthening the role play episode are outcomes of using this strategy.[72]

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[72]Dember and Earl.

Conclusion

If appropriately used, the strategies of indirect guidance of children and those directly related to the classroom materials selection have the potential for adding depth and breadth to the children's role play activities. Employing the strategies to enhance role play in turn facilitates language through: (a) growth in imaging; (b) increased recall; (c) discriminative listening; (d) development of novel forms of communication; (e) learning socially appropriate communication; and, (f) motoric actions.

Using role play in the service of cognitive processes such as language can substantially contribute to the development of receptive and expressive communication in children at early and middle childhood levels. Role play and growth in communication, as noted, comprise similar processes and strategies for role play and learning of language require the children to participate actively, understand, use and act on the ideas involved, actively think, receive clear feedback, and are intrinsically interesting.[73]

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[73]Rheta DeVries and Constance Kamii, "Why Group Games: A Piagetian Perspective," Educational Resources Information Center-Early Childhood Education 132 (Augist, 1975).